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**Big Brother
editorial**

**Auto Unions and
Niggermation**

**Open Letter from
Ossie Davis**

The Black Political Imperative

LIBERATOR

Vol 10 No 12 December 1970

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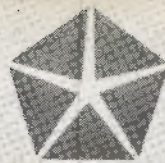
Big Brother

There are too many danger signals concerning our survival which we are tending either to ignore or write off as "irrelevant." Sometimes in our anxiety to measure our progress in getting it together we misread the signs. It was once said by a historian that the so-called Renaissance Period of European history was the "twilight that all Europe mistook for the dawn." So it was in the 1920's, when the elitists of the "Negro Renaissance" rejected Garvey's Black Nationalist movement -- a movement supported by thousands of Afro-Americans -- and thus contributed to its (and their) demise. And so it is today: Black elitists, while espousing endless and program-less rhetoric of Black Power, are discarding (in the name of the revolution) the fundamental humanistic values that allowed us to survive the long ordeal of slavery. They are straying away from the people.

We turn away from our responsibility for that long line of brothers and sisters nodding their lives away on the endless terrain of urban asphalt. We copout by saying they are the people most ready for revolution, write our angry rhetoric in order to turn them on and then desert them in the streets. So much of our rich African heritage is being dissipated in orgies of Blackness without providing one vehicle for the transfer of power from those who hold it to the powerless mass of Afro-Americans. So much energy lost in composing music that whites presumably will not be able to play, while disregarding the needs of our people for music that will enrich their lives. So much effort being put forth to negate the positive values of human endeavor. I plead guilty to making what must seem to be a cliché when I say, "In order for Revolution to succeed, it must embody the spirit and essence of the people." And yet today in the name of "Power to the People," lives are being ripped off, bodies are being broken, thousands of eager young Black minds are being poisoned with the irrelevant claim of "beauty and truth lie in conformity to the gospel of the self-appointed spokesmen of the moment."

We are a proud and diversified people; our survival lies in the very nature of our diversity and not in becoming slaves to an inhuman institution called oneness. We have not survived the eternity of crimes committed against us in order now to give up our first morsel of freedom to such anti-human concepts as we must *all* register zero (Blackness) on the light meter in order to be Black. The one thing we don't need is an Orwellian Big Black Brother.

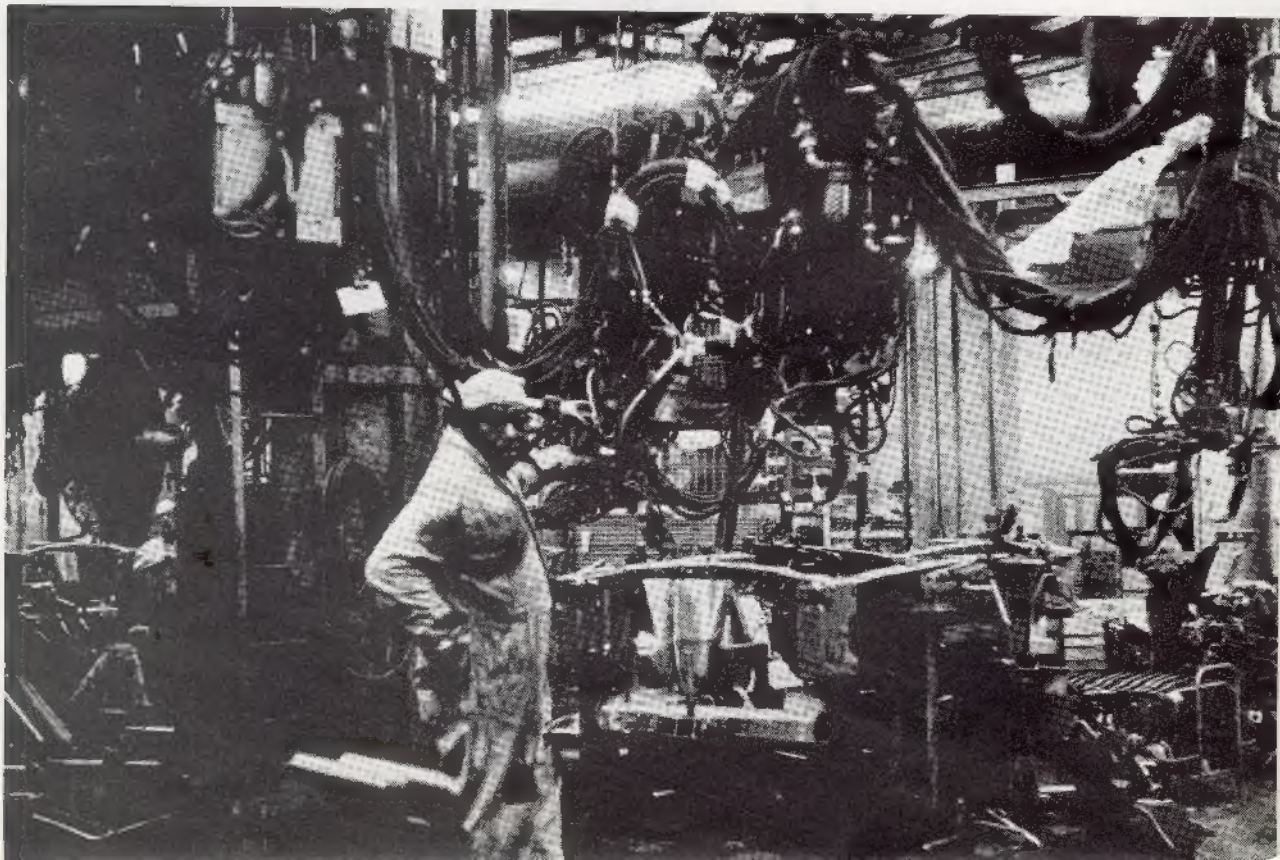
-- DANIEL H. WATTS



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AUTO UNIONS AND



"In 1946, when Reuther became President of the UAW, working conditions were poor and Black workers were victims of racism. Today, 1970, plant conditions are worse and Black workers are still victims of overt racism and niggermation at the point of production."

--Inner City Voice, paper of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

NIGGERMATION

photos by L N S

Non-white workers in the auto industry make up at least 40% of the United Auto Workers (UAW) membership. The 300,000 Black workers and the 100,000 Chicano and Puerto Rican workers are subjected to special discrimination in the plants through institutionalized racism -- yet in the automotive, steel, and rubber industries, they make up 70 to 85% of the work force. Their average wages fall far below those of white workers. They have the dirtiest, most dangerous jobs, and they are always the first to be laid off.

One researcher discovered that Ford fires about 600 Black workers

a week, who then hire on at other auto plants to be fired again. These workers are usually fired on their 89th day of employment, one day short of gaining seniority. Meanwhile, the UAW has already taken out its \$30 initiation fee and three months' dues (\$7 a month). This means the UAW is getting at least \$30,000 a year in all plants from 89-day-and-good-bye Black workers.

The auto industry is producing

over twice the number of vehicles with the same labor force of twenty years ago. (In 1947, there were 650,000 workers producing 4.5 million cars. In 1966, 650,000 workers produced nearly 10 million cars.) This gain is made through "niggermation" -- where speed-up on the line and compulsory overtime force one Black worker to do the job two or even three white workers did before.

cont next pg



A Detroit worker.



NIGGERMATION cont.

Between July 1968-1969, unemployment among Black teenagers in the Black ghetto of Detroit averaged 40%. It's higher now. A member of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, which organizes in auto plants in the Detroit area, explains how the Company can get away with niggermation: "Since we're so cheap, and since the economic situation is where it is, there'll always be people in want of a job. Black labor is the cheapest labor in the country. It's not feasible or profitable for the Man to automate the plants. The capitalist just thinks in terms of profit. He can predict, and damn near come within a few people of accuracy, how many people are going to die in the plant. And it only costs him about \$58 total labor, from the mines to final assembly to showroom, to produce a car in 1970. A thousand people touch that car, and it only costs this Man \$58."

A Black steward who works at Eldon Gear and Axle Plant in Detroit described the situation this way: "The union is our greatest enemy -- we know the Management's function is to make money. But we pay \$10 million to the union and can't get any representation!"

"All of the chief stewards got fed up one night at Eldon and cleared the plant. We shut off the lines and went home. When we went down to the Local, we were advised to go back to work. Next day the presi-

dent of the Local was on TV. To sum it all up, nothing was done.

"Why don't stewards get together? They'd fire every last one of us. The whole problem is the problem of color."

A leaflet passed out at Dodge Main by DRUM (Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, an arm of the League) talks about the UAW:

"As for the union bureaucrats, just so long as they are permitted to maintain their position of privilege, and they continue to be paid and paid well for doing nothing, then nothing is exactly what they will do. Black workers are abused by management and supervision on a day-to-day, hour-to-hour basis and the union is either unwilling or unable or both to correct this condition.

"Further, most of the younger workers don't even know who their shop steward is (elected union official paid by the company), or what he is supposed to do -- not that it makes any difference. Anytime we have a problem, we have no one to tell except the brother next to us and he usually already has the same problem."

In 1968, the year DRUM first began organizing at Dodge Main, they had a wildcat strike with a picket line around the plant and leaflets. They submitted a ten point program to management and to the UAW. "We were addressing ourselves to questions that the workers had raised such as why there were

not more Black foremen, Black plant protection, Black doctors in the hospital....From the UAW we wanted to know why there had been no Black positions, appointee positions, on the international level which the UAW has the power of appointing."

As a result of the wildcat strike, management moved with the support of the UAW to issue "John Doe" injunctions against the workers for wildcatting. The UAW made no move to protect the workers or to get the workers back to work.

RACISM IN THE UAW

Early in the history of the UAW, racism was an established fact. In Chrysler and GM plants, Blacks were often denied employment in all fields except janitorial services. Henry Ford recognized the labor value of the "big Black buck" and hired thousands of Black workers to work in his sweatshops before the UAW was organized. When the UAW first tried to organize Ford Rouge under the leadership of Walter Reuther, one of the white unionists' demands was that all Blacks be excluded from employment.

It wasn't until the Black workers made it clear that if they were excluded there would never be a UAW, that integration became a reality -- integration, that is, into the hardest, dirtiest, and lowest paying jobs. The union leadership only made this concession after Black workers broke picket lines set up by white union organizers.

After the UAW promised equality inside the union, Black workers joined, fought, and died to win the struggle for unionization. "Token" integration of the union leadership didn't allow Blacks political power to effectively demand equality. Today, only two of 26 international reps are Black. The few Blacks in the hierarchy come from the most conservative, and the least independent, element in the leadership of the Black community.

The \$10 million the UAW collects every month from its membership, the bulk of it from Black workers, goes to provide salaries, staff, and facilities for the UAW leadership. Millions of dollars are used for projects or for investment purposes, which are never designed to benefit the Black community.

The UAW has sold out workers through the years with "no-strike"

cont next pg



If you're white, chances are you may get to ride in a cart instead of pushing one.



NIGGERMATION cont.

agreements, a grievance procedure that defies a worker to get redress by allowing management to set production and work schedules. This past summer, the UAW announced that they would strike GM and Chrysler, but would allow Ford to work so they could produce Pintos and Mavericks to compete with the minis.

The union has always avoided the task of challenging management's claim to control the conditions and rate of production. For instance, the UAW's bargaining during the GM strike did not contain demands around control over safety conditions, speed-up, and compulsory overtime.

The response of the UAW to the systematic racism of the corporation has been mainly accommodation. The UAW, born of violence and militance in the 1930's, has done basically nothing for its Black and Third World workers. When Black workers advocated a Black member of the international executive board, the union leadership resisted for 20

years, calling it "Jim Crow in reverse."

As the proportion of Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican workers steadily increased over the last 25 years, the UAW has sanctioned the deterioration of wages and working conditions in the lowest occupational categories, allowed speed-up and compulsory overtime, and institutionalized restrictions which excluded non-white workers from the skilled trades.

Black workers face a monster every day. The dangerous and inhuman conditions in the factories force workers to struggle against their environment of total regimentation and alienation, to resist, to fight, and sometimes to die for their own survival.

Hundreds of Black caucuses have spontaneously risen within industry over the past decade. These caucuses have attempted to struggle along class lines and against racism, using many different tactics and strategies. As more and more young

Black workers enter the plants, the militancy of the struggles have increased.

A recent DRUM leaflet points out the revolutionary potential of organized Black labor in the plants:

"We are, and always have been, in a powerful position in this society, and the reason that this is true, while we perform the most objectionable jobs in industry, at the same time, these jobs...are the most essential jobs in the system.

"The thing that we have which the UAW doesn't have is the support of the workers on the primary level, that is, the support of the workers at the point of production. The most important power that you have is the power to be able to close down the plant. The union can run down all the rules and regulations and laws, articles in the constitution and contracts that it wants to. But if you pull a large enough number of workers out of the plant, that plant isn't going to run until we decide that we're going to run it again."

Happy Ford workers returning home.



michigan autumn

detroit's not a bad
place to grow up in
if u don't know
other places exist
seasons come n tarry
bringing with them the
freshness of change
when fall came
it didn't quite matter
to us
if there was no electricity
of if the plumbing had broken down
it didn't really matter
if we had only moth-eaten secondhand sweaters
n thin-soled sneakers to brave the onrushing cold
for we had grown
to accept these conditions
as the natural order of things
unaware
we didn't know the rest of the wld existed
n though happy by default
we squeezed every bit of joy
out of our cornered existence
we would rake leaves into heaping piles
n crackle them under our feet
n our dog joined in
n scampered thru pile afta pile
of neighbors' leaves
as she followed us to
the after school football game
we'd hurl our young bodies
thru the cool still air
that chapped our lips
n turned our skins an ashen gray
n bash each other
to the ground
like young gladiators
as we played out the last innocent
moments of our lives
when the awesome autumn sun

turned the western skies red
n slipped behind grand blvd
the boundary of our wld
we'd trek home
to be greeted by the wild erotic incense
of burning leaves
all along the block / like beacons
to guide weary travelers
fiery leaves glowed
silhouetting figures of men with rakes
n children enchanted by flame
we'd postpone homework
to dip our fingers into
mason jars of plum / apple / n cherry jam
stored away for the winter
those were the mellow autumns
of the blissful years
before we embarked upon
our predestined journey
before we discovered
the outside wld
before we found that
cigarettes n cheap wine
n hastily issued promises of love
separated brown sugar mamas
from their chastity
before school turned sour
n made us hate / n fear the wld we didn't know
n ourselves
before bobby became a junkie
n bad wine drove j.d. crazy
before freckles gave up hope
n nicky became a faggot
before the girls were
cursed with the fruits of nature
n subjected themselves to
hack butchers / or foul social workers
before we discovered
other things / n other places
autumn n michigan was hip
--- othello mahome

The Black

We must first assume that the dimensions of social existence for any ethnic sector of society are political, economic, and cultural. Corresponding to each of these dimensions is an "imperative" or a prime motivation for success.

Elementary American mythology teaches us that good Americans are politically motivated by a sense of duty. A more mature analysis will show that voting and other political activity is motivated by political issues. Looking even deeper, we find that "issues" are euphemisms for the protection of economic and cultural interests. Therefore, economic and cultural success have been the basic prerequisites for political motivation in America. Actually, we find that economic success is the prime factor because a group's affluence will patronize and expand its cultural institutions. And while political activity relates to the protection of economic interests, it does not directly relate to acquiring the wealth on which economic interests are based.

The political process is more meaningful to the middle and upper classes because it has been institutionalized within the framework of domestic tradition. The value and methods of political participation have passed from generation to generation in economically successful homes and communities. Therefore, the traditional American political imperative is in essence a middle-and upper-class phenomenon, justified by the protection of econom-

ic and cultural interests and propagated by domestic tradition. Clearly the poor Black community has had neither the economic interests to protect nor the medium to instill the value and method of protecting such interests politically.

Historically Blacks, despite their large numbers, have not wielded political leverage equal to their potential. They have been limited by economic and cultural barriers as well as overt political oppression which developed negative political traditions in their domestic structure. Like other Americans, Blacks have manifested their political activity through partisan affiliation. They have been members of both major parties at one time or another since Emancipation, but only in terms of voting. Only in the last two decades have Blacks reached the policy making echelons of parties through membership on state and national committees.

The contemporary affiliation of Blacks with Democrats did not start to develop until after the first F.D.R. Administration. Before that time, the few Blacks who did politically participate had been solidly Republican since Lincoln. The obvious reason for this was Emancipation. The not-so-obvious reason was that the Democratic party was dominated by racist slave-owning Southerners typified by the party's founder, Andrew Jackson. Reconstruction found Blacks placed in many high state and federal offices by Northern Republicans who were more interested in rubbing the faces of the secessionist white Southerners in the ashes of the Old South than in providing just leadership. Radical Northern Republicans under Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, took

the vote from Southern white males and gave it to Blacks. The Confederate states were divided into five military districts and garrisoned by federal troops. This not only took state and local political control from white Southerners, but it erased the South's congressional power. Black politicians and voters were the political pawns of their Northern emancipators. Black elected officials were not responsive to the needs of post-Civil War Blacks. Owing their political existence and power to Republicans and having no real economic or cultural interest of their own, these Blacks legislated as they were instructed by Republicans. The impeachment of Johnson in 1869 led to a more sympathetic view of Southern Reconstruction. At this point, even radical Republicans were willing to reduce their punishment of the Democratic South. The Republicans had had their revenge, the white Democratic South had a chance to rebuild, and the Blacks had nothing.

The old Southern Democratic party structure had regrouped itself by the turn of the century. It had regained its state legislatures and governorships and, of course, expelled all Blacks and Republicans from power. Overt harassment, property requirements, and poll taxes were among the instruments used by whites to keep Blacks out of the political process in the South. The renewed political prominence of the South in Congress made meaningful federal legislation to guarantee Blacks their right to vote as well as other rights impossible. Only token opposition to this political repression emerged in the North, thus showing that Emancipation itself was merely a vendetta instrument

William H. Banks Jr. is the Co-Chairman of the Young Black Political Action Committee in New York.

Political Imperative

by WILLIAM H. BANKS JR.

and not a meaningful reform goal. Poverty, overt and de facto political repression, as well as apathy, left Blacks with an enduring and justified estrangement from political participation.

The beginning of the twentieth century brought mass immigration and migration to the North. The Victorian form of such cities as New York, Philadelphia, and Boston was crumbling. The Industrial Revolution was proliferating a new working class and a new form of political leadership, i.e., the clubhouse. The minority ghettos of this period were exploited by ruthless clubhouse politicians. They traded the votes of their communities for outrageous patronage and cash payoffs. In return, the people received only poor public services.

The new urban working class was initially exploited by low wages, poor working conditions, and arduous child labor. Racism kept Blacks out of trades and factories. Therefore, Blacks were left out of trade and industrial unions. These unions went on to strengthen their members economically and themselves politically within the Democratic party. On both counts, Blacks were left out.

The cultural and economic gulf between the Republican old-liners of Northern cities and the new immigrants made political assimilation or association between them impossible. It is interesting to note that the cultural gap between immigrants and old-liners persisted even after the economic differences began to disappear. The partisan camps took on well defined cultural connotations. The Republicans' cultural model was white, protestant, Western European with American

roots extending back at least three generations. There were, of course, exceptions to this Republican cultural stereotype but they included such examples of cultural transmutation as wealthy Jews and Scandinavians who left their communities, renounced their religion, anglicized their names, and married into exclusive families. The Urban Democratic party was common to those minority members whose social behavior was largely ethnocentric despite economic conditions.

Blacks, with a few notable exceptions, remained subordinated in the modern urban Democratic party structure. Their vote was still taken for granted and their public services continued to deteriorate. With the entire nation economically leveled by the Depression, Blacks received the partial benefits of the massive economic rebuilding efforts of F.D.R. Even though the Depression has evidently not ended for many Blacks, the New Deal accounts for many of today's Black Democrats. The relatively stable Eisenhower years more or less divided national Black political opinion between the Democrats and the Republicans. The New Frontier and the War on Poverty of the Kennedy-Johnson years brought Blacks to a position of approximately 90% Democratic registration.

The betrayal of political parties and the lack of economic and cultural ties with them is a strong case against political activity for the poor Black community. In arguing for political participation, however, I must point out that overt and systematic political oppression is sustained as much by the political inactivity of the poor as by the political power of the non-poor. Secondly, we must realize that only

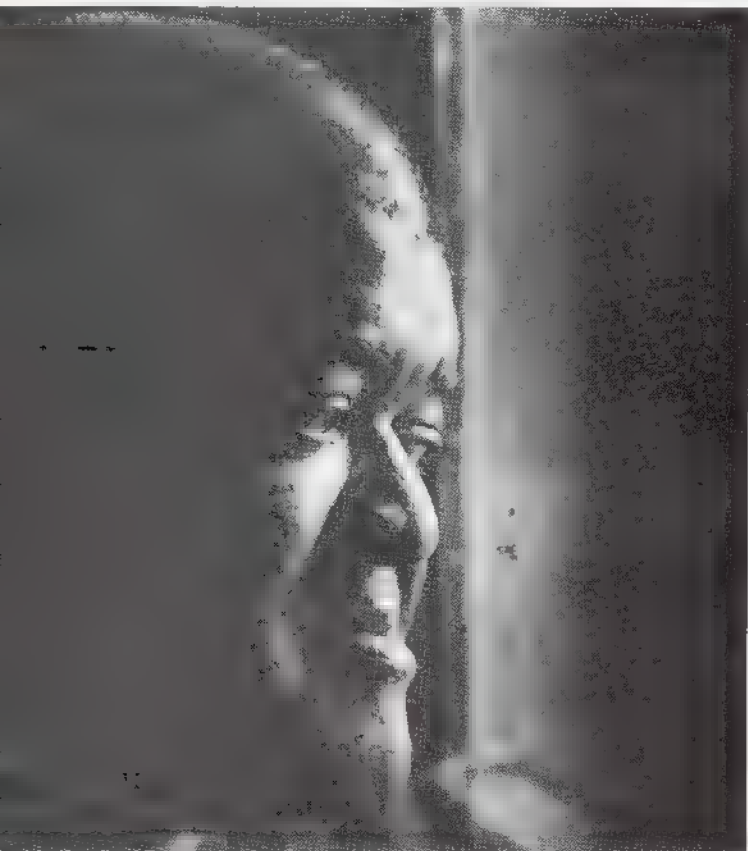
a viable, responsive political structure will give us and maintain for us the actual control of our basic community institutions - i.e., schools, police, sanitation.

Today most Blacks are in the liberal wing of the Democratic party. Liberal leadership is responsible for many reform programs. More often than not, however, these programs did more to obviate Black problems than to solve them.

The future of Blacks in the classical liberal coalition will be determined by many factors. The most important of these is the amount of economic success of the Black community. A gradual but significant increase of economic development in the Black community will sustain Black membership in the coalition. This assumes that the economic progress will be manifested in terms of intellectual and artistic pre-eminence as well as the proliferation of a successful Black working class. Without intellectual and artistic pre-eminence Blacks would not be able to participate in the liberal dominance of the popular culture.

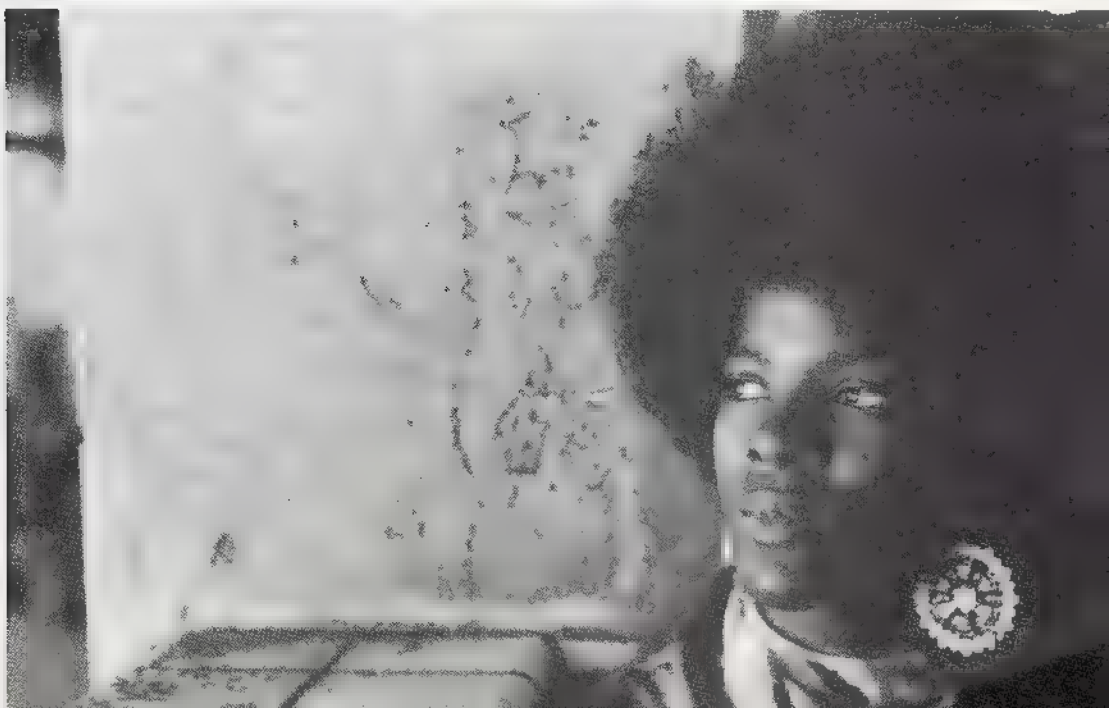
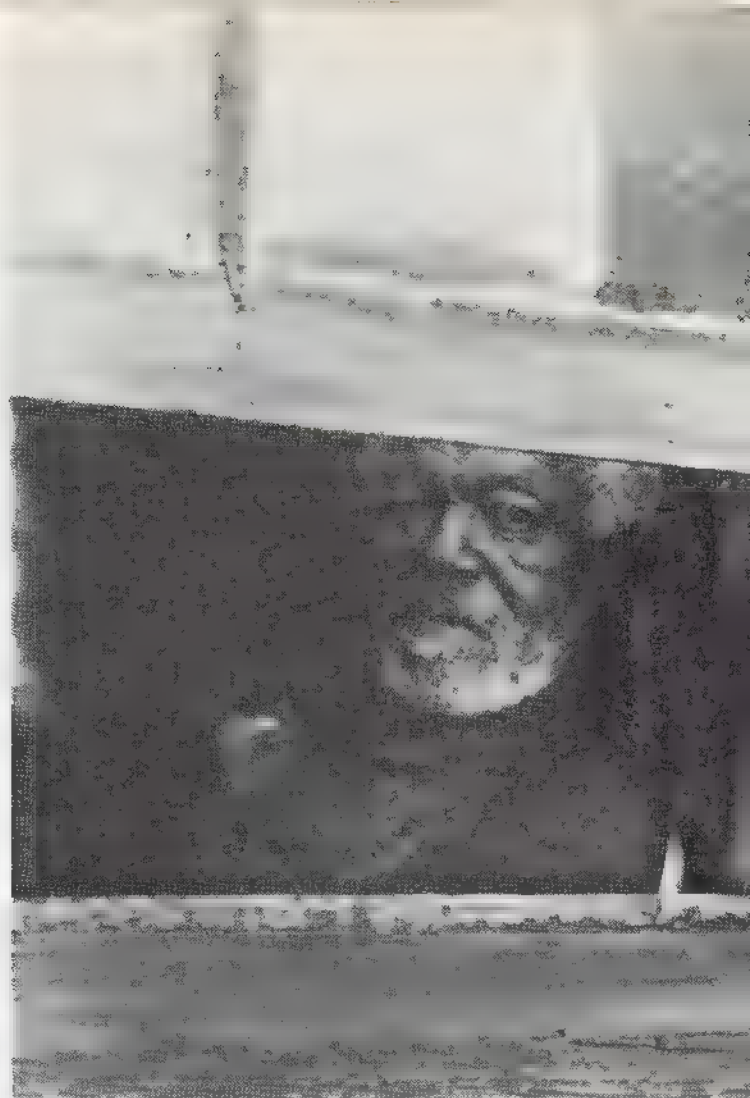
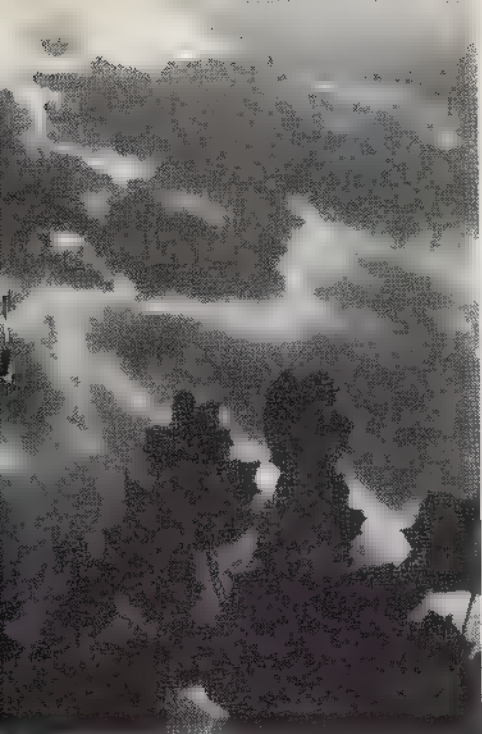
Even if Blacks were to become economically successful, there is also the possibility that the liberal culture makers and the liberal coalition politicians would turn against them as they have turned against other successful minorities. This is evidenced by the way the liberal culture makers have unromantically and unsympathetically stereotyped the Irish, Polish, and Italians in the media and in literature. The liberal coalition politicians have, in effect, turned against the economic interests of successful minorities by emphasizing social programs which middle-class minorities must pay for with their taxes.

cont on pg 14



The Elusive Sun

Photos by Frederick Floyd



If economic progress is too slow for most Blacks, liberal affiliation will be reconsidered. This possibility should be examined most seriously because economic progress will always be considered too slow by those who remain poor. At this point, the organization of poor people's political activity would be the political imperative.

A poor people's political movement has no hope of existence without vital structures which do not now exist in the Black community. The first structure must be a non-partisan resident political task force. This force must be manned by the residents themselves because this is the only way to guarantee autonomy and community responsiveness. Ideally, the workers would be chosen by the same method used for selecting people for jury duty. The work of the group would be basically research and the disbursement of information. The group would poll community residents to ascertain local opinion on political issues and discover new issues. The task force would also monitor community hearings on prospective legislation, community improvements, etc. These hearings would be a revival of the old town meeting on the neighborhood scale. The community hearings could be updated with the aid of mass media; educational television and radio could schedule broadcasts of the hearings. The funds for the task force should come from tax sharing, community levied taxes on cigarettes, liquor, and entertainment, or possibly a community lottery. The overall result of the task force's activity would be a more revitalized and accessible political process for the ghetto. Although the task force would not be controlled by local partisan politicians, it would definitely serve them. If the political communications system,

which the task force would monitor, could be adequately developed, all local candidates could deliver their message to the people at no cost to themselves. This would mean that candidacy would no longer be limited to those with access to wealth. It would also mean that local politicians would not be tied to a given party for campaign funds. Political community media could also be a means of financing the task force. Candidates running for non-local offices -- i.e., municipal, state, and national -- could purchase equal amounts of exposure on the community network.

The second vital structure which must be added to the poor Black community is institutionalized political education. The schools, being part of the community, must be phased into the offensive against political inactivity. Meaningful political studies courses should be introduced at the junior high school level and continued through high school graduation. New political studies courses should de-emphasize partisan ideologies and political personalities and concentrate on the techniques, rules, and regulations which govern the political process. Established political parties would be studied analytically rather than philosophically. The courses would, therefore, study petitions, referendums, and party committee structure. With the 18-year-old vote virtually a national reality, community schools should also be thought of as a location for registration of young voters.

Throughout the analysis it should be clear that the new political strategy for the Black community should be based on a neighborhood scale. Even the extensive use of mass media should not overshadow this fact. In keeping with this philosophy, it should be maintained that partisan consideration should

be nonexistent on the neighborhood level. The general rule should be that the fewer the number of citizens affected by a political office or issue, the smaller should be the influence of established parties. It is only in this way that neighborhoods and communities can develop characteristic and responsive political systems.

It should not be inferred from the above that poor Blacks should withdraw from municipal, state, and national political processes which more than likely will remain partisan. Instead, definite municipal, state, and national voting blocks should be encouraged. The poor Black strategy can be manifested in city, state, and national structures by poor people's caucuses within parties. The membership in the poor people's caucus would be automatic for some office holders and conditional for others. Those office holders whose constituency is, for instance, 40% or more poor -- i.e., under the national poverty level -- would have automatic membership. Those office holders with a smaller percentage of poor constituents could apply to the caucus for membership. A vital function of the community political task forces would be to monitor the activities of the caucuses for the communities and provide inputs to the caucuses from the communities.

The violent aspect of the Black movement is symptomatic of the lack of Black political power. However, violence, even when it is politically motivated, is no more than political adolescence. Black political manhood involves the formation of a strong political structure created not by laws, coalitions, or parties, but by Blacks themselves, among themselves. Political power is never given by society; it is created by the citizens.

An Open Letter from Ossie Davis

November 20, 1970

Mr. Arthur O. Sulzberger
President and Publisher
New York Times
239 West 43rd Street
New York, New York 10036

Dear Mr. Sulzberger:

It has come to my attention that in an article carried in the *New York Times* on September 19, 1970 Mr. Edwin B. Ellis was described as the editor of the *LIBERATOR*. Mr. Ellis is of course not the editor of the *LIBERATOR* and never was. I understand that the facts in this matter have been brought to your attention on three separate occasions by Mr. Daniel H. Watts, who is the editor of the magazine and that you have not responded by either publishing a retraction or an apology. I am shocked that an institution like the *New York Times* should so cavalierly disregard the facts in this matter and I wonder if perhaps the *New York Times* isn't out to punish Mr. Watts and his magazine, perhaps ultimately to drive them from the scene?

It is common knowledge that I have differed with Mr. Watts in the past on a matter of principle. But my difference did not constitute a censure of either Mr. Watts or of the *LIBERATOR*. I thought then and I think now the *LIBERATOR* is the most important Black nationalist magazine in the country. I defend its right to exist and I can only believe your deliberate use of a misstatement about the relationship of Mr. Ellis, who is under criminal conviction, and the *LIBERATOR* was meant not only to slander the magazine but possibly to drive it out of existence.

Too often in the past the white liberal establishment has felt authorized by God himself, perhaps, to speak to the question of what is and is not good for the Black people. I resent this attitude on your part, and I join Mr. Dan Watts in calling for an immediate retraction and an apology, for this unconscionable action on your part.

Sincerely,

Ossie Davis (signed)

OD:emb

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Economic Opportunity in the Ghetto: The Partnership of Government and Business, by Sar A. Levitan, Garth L. Mangum & Robert Taggart III. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970. \$1.95 (paperback)

Black Economic Development, edited by William F. Haddad and G. Douglas Pugh. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1969. \$1.95 (paperback)

Black Capitalism, by Theodore Cross. New York: Atheneum, 1969. \$8.95 (hardcover)

The authors whose books are reviewed here are all concerned with the forms government and industrial control of the Black economy will take.

Haddad and Pugh believe the major problem for Black economic development is to determine "how to utilize white experience without subverting Black leadership or control." The articles included in their little book thoroughly examine and argue means of achieving such white participation, maintaining focus on Black leadership, not ownership.

Of the seventeen individuals represented in this book, five are present or former government executives; five others are present or former university administrators or faculty members; two are national business association executives; one is a corporate manufacturing executive; one is a Ford Foundation executive; four are consultant firm executives; one is a national Black organization leader; and one is a reporter. (Obviously, some belong to more than one category, including at least three other Blacks.) Thirteen have the kind of jobs that put them in a position to supply "white experience" at a profit. Then there are the government executives. The motive for this book is plainly to promote a policy that would create

consultancies for this group of whites. It is not a scholarly attempt to define a workable economic policy for Blacks.

Levitan, Mangum, and Taggart are university research center executives and professors. They propose in their book to analyze government efforts at ghetto business development, which they conclude are less than totally successful.

Theodore Cross is a banker and lawyer who bases his book on the premise "that the skills and benefits of entrepreneurship must be transferred to the residents of the black slums." The transfer mechanism? Tax credit to the Transforor, the industrial and financial sector of the main economy, rather than to the Transforecs, the Black firms supposedly to be helped.

Cross plainly states that his "primary objective" is "to involve industrial corporations, banks and insurance companies" in the ghetto economy (p. 155). But the Blacks' entire policy thrust is toward Black economy and disengagement of whites. A program of tax incentives would insinuate the power of monopoly capitalism into the ghetto in a more or less permanent fashion, because providing skills does not provide property ownership as we are well aware. But lending provides potential equity in the borrowing enterprise for the lender.

Indeed, one ghetto development strategy bypasses a reference to any form of Black control, calling for industries establishing branches in the ghetto as wholly owned subsidiaries of the parent company. And the industries that establish such plants are "firms seriously threatened by ghetto problems," "insulated from the costs of social commitment" (by the subsidiary) or "those which stand to benefit from such activities." (Levitan, *et al.*, p. 15). They are, therefore, special cases in American industry.

But the limited success of initial efforts at subsidies -- OEO, MA 3 training programs, SBA 502 program, etc. -- raises the question of racism and discrimination again. Levitan, *et al.*, claim to have found no significant change in hiring practices despite subsidies.

Moreover, capitalism is about ownership, and the SBA, the command post of the Black capitalism fight, has a very poor record of loans actually made to Blacks in ghetto areas. Neither have efforts to encourage franchisors to sell dealerships to ghetto residents been notably successful. In Brownsville, Balyn., a Kentucky fried chicken shop is the only franchise that has opened in the last three years.

Finally, the question should be asked: Whose policy is Black Capitalism? From all indications, it is a government planners' program not a people's program. All the literature on the subject comes from white government, and academic officials. Black printed comment is very rare.

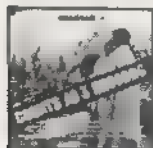
The fact that the initiator of the program is the government has political implications. First it appears that the object is to reconquer the city centers, at least in the East, for very big business, international firm headquarters and the like. One aspect of this program is the creation of a Black elite, a larger Black bourgeoisie, that will own and be employed in this petty capitalist facade created by the program. This marginal stratum of firms will locate in the suburban rings, where they and medium-sized white manufacturing and transportation firms will employ unskilled Blacks from the core cities. But the census shows that these unskilled Blacks also are moving to the suburbs, to be near these jobs. Thus the apparently growing electoral strength of the ghettos is being undercut.

In sum, these books all are about the economics of Nixonian colonial politics.

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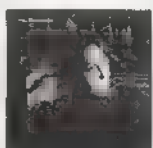
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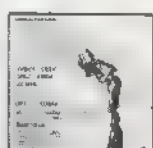
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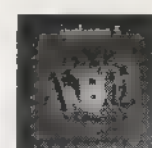
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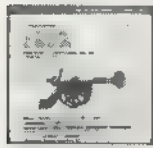
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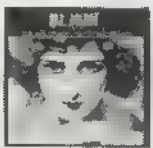
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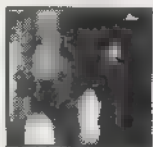
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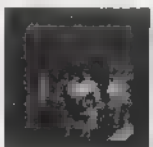
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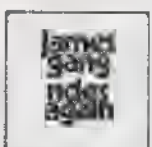
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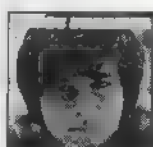
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by CLAYTON RILEY

For our poets...too much death. Too many passings too soon. In the night, visionaries murdered in bed; on the stages of ancient, musty dance halls, from the mezzanines of negro-owned motels and from the mysterious confines of precinct basements and maximum security (?) cellblocks -- they leave us. Perhaps, all things in our world considered, some of them have left for better times.

But not Lorraine Hansberry.

1965 ... at age 34 ... the Sister passes. Who had so much more to tell us.

Left behind, a play. *Les Blancs*. (*The Whites*.) Five years afterward -- now -- we can see her last work at the Longacre in New York.

And we should.

The play is incomplete as adapted by the Sister's husband, Robert Nemiroff, its flaws occasionally compounded by the obvious demands of the Broadway marketplace. See it anyway.

See it, remember that this was work done in 1960, when the rest of us were getting ready for the revolution with our heads clipped into Quo Vadis' (or piled high into nigger imitations of alcoholic movie stars), when we believed America was really making ready for our graceful, high-rise, new car, cowboy-suited entry into the mainstream. (Even as we screamed, *Oh Jesus how I hate whiteness*, we wrote exquisite requests for foundation grants, paid him rent, bought the Buick from his representatives, lounged about in ranchwear that he approved, bought and sold his lucrative drugs.)

Sister Hansberry was out in front of us. Couple of miles at least. Showing us the way to understanding that whiteness's death will not hide our own roles in a criminal regime, will not alter the fact that you can't refute a system's values while you live with and for them every day. As in revolutionaries wearing buttons made in South Korea's puppet government sweatshops, driving new cars manufactured in America's racist

sweatshops, talking about Black capitalism without realizing or caring that capitalism only works when a class of people can be victimized and exploited...speaking of nation time as if it can be accomplished without recognizing that socialism -- an African system -- must be a central goal.

Les Blancs brings us Tshembe Matoseh, returning to Africa a day after funeral services have been held for his father, a tribal leader. (Tshembe arriving CPT, a comment from the outset.)

On the homefront, which is as it was, frontier headquarters for all things real and imagined in the missionary framework. Legends of the colonial empire's expertise, unspoken but signally clarified...as a sigh or two rises from the Longacre's expensive seats, the sound of wondering where it all went; the grinning natives serving gin-rickeys on all verandas from Nairobi to Leopoldville. All gone. Replaced by grinning natives coolly slicing off heads, waiting table in the daylight, waiting in ambush during the night.

Tshembe is caught at a personal crossroads. Beginning to realize that his Western education has always been designed to teach the value of accepting the prevailing conditions. Which Western white people have done traditionally, calling for infrequent modifications -- as long as the basic structure is never tampered with. Sort of a philosophy that reads: Let a few of the niggers join us, we can exploit the rest together. That sort of mission liberalism. Has Tshembe, in fact, learned that from kindergarten to doctoral thesis he has gained nothing more significant or useful than how to behave himself in the company of the true owners of his life?

Possibly.

Certainly he will note the fact that his brother, Abioseh, in a final triumph of the missionary intelligence, is taking -- even in the wake of their father's death -- vows to become a Catholic priest. Thus accepting

the same bible used to justify the rape of both his people and his land. (Do we understand this, do we see what connects these implications to our own priests -- Roy Wilkins, whose bible is his bankbook, and others ...? Are we aware, as we must be, that the forum that structures and permits these outrages, American *Black or White*, is what needs destruction?)

Tshembe back at the mission hospital -- suit and necktie gleaming acceptance -- to learn that there can hardly be a proper negotiation with evil forces...meeting a liberal white American journalist, Charlie Morris, who still really believes he is guilty of nothing. Nothing.

(No Jews passed through our town on the way to any gas chambers, Mein Herr.)

It is in the conversations between these two that we see the reality of Sister Hansberry's probing, wondrous consciousness, taking it all in, running it all down.

Isn't the time for talking past... the sophisticated cocktail chitchat... the benevolently extended favors (how does the fascist offer to help?) and whatnot...?

Tshembe is needed, so says Peter -- a candidate for All-Africa in the tomming and tothing-it sweepstakes who is, despite any of this, the most heroic and tragic figure in the play.

Tshembe? Played with an arresting, awesome brilliance by James Earl Jones, he survives. In London he leaves a European wife and their child and decides to seek his own sort of resolution to the question of what Africa ultimately must be. And, perhaps, although this is not so clear in the play's adaptation, what he ultimately must be.

Who else do we meet at the Longacre? The elderly wife of the missionary, growing blind with the advancing years, who has taught Tshembe too much for too long. The role is played splendidly by Lily Darvas.

And a disenchanted physician who illuminates the dimly lighted rotten core of colonialism when he

cont on pg 23

Burn is a curious picture. One, the director, Gillo Pontecorvo of *Battle of Algiers* fame, raises certain expectations. Two, the on-screen off-screen career of the major actor, Marlon Brando, tends to add a dimension to the film and the character he plays (recall his Emiliano Zapata and Ugly American portrayals and his mascot alliance to Black Panthers and his Great White Father role to Indian Power groups). The film itself is a mess--cinematically, musically, politically, ideologically. Ain't one positive visual of us in the film. Matter of fact, we are either a mob or a prop or a mere diversion, seen, even in close-ups, from a great distance. A drag. But lemme not get ahead of myself.

Sir William Walker (Brando), in the employ of the British government, comes to Quemada, a Portuguese colony in the lesser Antilles, to help the Black resistance. He learns upon his arrival that the Black leader Santiago has been seized and is in the garrote--a devilishly clever little collar invention which, when turned, breaks your neck. He's eager to make contact with Santiago's forces and break the power of the Portuguese so the British can take over. But Mrs. Santiago, haulin' off the headless corpse of a husband, ain't sayin' nothin'. The camera moves away too quickly for us to decide whether she ain't talkin' because there are no underground people or because she got sense enough not to trust crackers. Anyway, Walker decides to leave, for clearly there aren't any worthy Blacks on the island as he demonstrates to Teddy Sanchez (played by Renato Salvatore in pancake number 12, 15, 9, 4 in respective reels so that we never know whether he's supposed to be Portuguese, metizo, or just an Italian actor in inconsistent make-up to balance the American actor in inconsistent British accent) by flinging coins to the "boys" to scramble over. But then a procession of chained slaves is marched through the town. And a daring porter, Jose,

sneaks some food to a mother and is promptly smashed in the head with a Portuguese rifle butt. He picks up a rock and; close-up camera freeze on Potential Revolutionary with Rock in Hand and Mayhem in Mind. (We never, by the way, see Blacks killin' crackers with purpose and deliberation... except at the end.)

Walker stays, of course, to groom Jose Dolores. He enlists Jose and friends in a bank robbery and they hide out in a village. On the q.t. Walker has tipped the officials that Blacks with gold are on the island. Walker puts it to Jose: "Did we rob the bank to come here and get killed? Or did we steal the gold so we could be rich and free?" So Jose puts it to the villagers: "You can either hide in the high Sierras or pick up the gun." So they wipe out the troops (we never see this, keep in mind) and Jose is well on his way to becoming an outlaw and a revolutionary. As Walker explains to Jose: "If I had told you to start a revolution, you would not have known what I was talking about. But to rob a bank, ahhh, that you could understand." (Got it? O.K.) Back at the town council, Walker raps his theory of economic self interest: Which is cheaper to maintain, a wife or a whore? A slave or a worker? (Got that? Right.) But what if the slave decides, once freed, to be not a wage earner but the BOSS? To avoid that, Walker explains, join in the revolution or you'll have another Haiti on your hands. So they join in. Sanchez assassinates the governor and becomes president of the provisional government. Which pleases General Jose Dolores of the People's Army not at all. He brushes past the reception committee and sets his handsome self down in the governor's seat. Unfortunately, Jose don't know a thing about the sugar market, stock quotes, export-import, but he keeps vetoing everything anyway. Finally he clears the whites out of the council. (A brother behind me pipes up with, "Better wipe em out after ya clear em out, if you know what I know." But Jose don't know what the brother in the show know. Which means we gotta make our own

films if you know what I know.) Walker decides he's got to kill this nigger who's gotten out of hand. But he doesn't have to, cause Jose's decided to withdraw. They will lay down their arms ("Oh shituu," groans the brother) and return to the plantations (the brother slaps his cap against the back of the seat like it's my fault).

Ten years later. The British have backed the provisional-now-permanent government of Quemada and together they are exploitin' the hell out of the island (99 year lease on the sugar...renewable). But unfortunately that damn Jose is disruptin' good race relations, so law and order experts are called in. Sir William Walker, who left in reel 3 to go to -- are you ready? -- Indochina, is now asked to be military advisor to Quemada. He advises the generals to destroy the guerillas' community bases. So urban renewal and everybody put on welfare in the form of a truckload of bread which they rush, so quite naturally the national guard (that's us in uniform) defend themselves against the starvin' populace by firing on the crowd. Then the island is pacified, that is, burned to the ground to smoke the insurrectionists out. Which is ironic, you see, cause "quemada" means "burnt." The Portuguese centuries before had burned the place down to subdue the Indians. But when the smoked cleared, there weren't enough natives to cut the cane so Africans were imported as slaves. Now, mid-19th century, the English have done the same. I guess they import the Chinese after this.

Jose is caught. Problem: a dead hero becomes a martyr who becomes a myth which is dangerous in the Antilles. So they try to make deals with Jose who laughs his ass off. Walker goes to the boat as Jose goes to the rope. There's Brando in another one of them fruity Jesus Christ close-ups, haggard, haunted, mity, the sound track really goin' off now with organ and stained-glass window and cherubim and seraphim and incense pot and what have you. Walker hears a "Carry your bag, sir" and hopes against hope that it is his trusty ole hand-made revolutionary ex-porter Jose. It ain't.

It's another brother with a more direct kinda program. He ices Sir William. And the music really breaks loose. Then a camera pan of some surly looking dock workers whose faces are supposed to let you know (faces throughout aren't very communicative; you have to do the work yourself cause Pontecorvo evidently couldn't or didn't let on to nobody what he was into here) that Jose Dolores did not die in vain.

So there you are. Except, the initial problem we start out with in reel 1 -- CLARITY -- is still the problem when the screen goes white. Who is this Walker dude anyway? Never mind Brando's indecision as to whether to aim for solemn James Mason drama and conflict or ironic David Niven sophistication and tomfoolery. How conscious are his acts and what are we supposed to make of his hard on, his misty eyes, his reel 5 "but why, Jose, why don't you run?" We are as baffled as Brando and director. Which goes to show that crackers know as little about themselves as they do about anything or anyone else. And who are all these people who pass in front of the camera, what are they about? The newsreel verisimilitude of *Battle of Algiers* worked cause the technique was appropriate and consistent and we got a chance to feel the presence of at least the four major characters. But here, all them close-ups and camera sweeps mean nothing. And there ain't a woman presence nowhere. Nobody got an old lady. And Mrs. Santiago (a presence right out of a Charles Wright folio) never gets to us cause the cameraman got no instructions and neither did she.

But, anyway, there are several lessons we can draw from the clutter:

1. White folks create Black revolutionaries for their own ends (so says Pontecorvo via Brando).

2. The man who owns the plantation will one day yield (ONE DAY hmmm) to the man who owns the machete (teaches Jose to his group).

3. Don't lay down your arms, Bloods, till ya wipe the crackers out (so says the brother behind me).

4. No one gives you freedom -- unless it is convenient. "If they re-

lease the hawk it is only to be a decoy and then to be caged up again" (so says Jose to the brother who takes him in).

5. Power depends on international expertise (the governor chair episode teaches us, just as similar episode in *Viva Zapata* teaches us that power corrupts. In either case, niggers don't belong in no governor chair).

6. As for us and that disease called white civilization: "Jose Dolores say that it is better to know Why we go and not Where than to know Where to go but not Why."

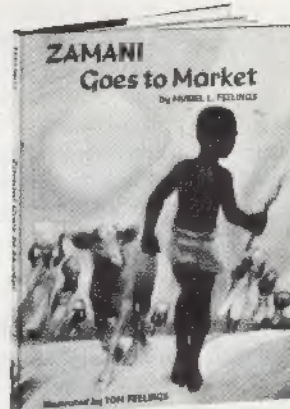
7. Whites align with Black revolt only to contain it and to steer it in the direction of their self-interest (the British replace the Portuguese exploiters).

8. After all them shots in film after film, book after book, of us killin' us, of us internalizing all that white hate Black poison -- recall when the Zulus kicked mucho British ass who they got to fight the Zulus? Jamaicans. Us. And when the Zulus saw their brothers from the West land on the shore, they dropped their weapons and rushed to welcome them with open arms. And got wiped out. And still we send our children, OUR CHILDREN, to their lobotomy laboratories to be surgerized. We even demand it. Proud that Our children are in Their schools.

All in all, I think we'd better check *Battle of Algiers* out again. I'd better anyway. Cause I always had the gnawin' sensation in my brain that what Pontecorvo had presented was the FLN as a terrorist group only. And the only violence we see is Algerian violence. French brutality is offstage, action or only verbal (that fantastic interview with the French general). Stacked deck? Clearly a stacked deck in *Burn* where we are on the scene as a slave parade only to introduce Jose, or are a drunken mob only to provide cover for the bank job, or are a dance show to cover Sanchez's assassination of the governor. We dance, we drink, we die, we rob banks, we get hung. And there you are: a sick film.

And worth seeing for that only. If you spend money for *Cotton* and

Watermelon Man and *The Slaves* and all them other numbers, might as well go see this. And take notes. And master some film skills. No tellin' from what quarter our films will come. Hope soon.



Muriel Feelings, who taught for two years in Uganda, and Tom Feelings, who has visited there, have created an exciting picture storybook about a day in the life of a small East African boy. And a very special day it is, too, for Zamani (Swahili for "the first one") accompanies his father to market for the first time, buys his mother a gift, and comes home to a fine surprise for himself. The softly rendered yet strong illustrations in brown and gold convey the dignity, pride, and beauty of an East African family today. 48 pages \$3.95

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Letters to the Editor

The Last Poets

Dear Brother,

This letter is meant not to be a defense of *The Last Poets* (*LIBERATOR*, November 1970) but an effort in the direction of clearing the air.

One of the primary troubles hanging over literature is its stagnation. Another is literary criticism based on dogmatic criteria, criteria external to the experiences given by the artist -- in this case, by *The Last Poets*.

What has been happening in literature in general and in poetry in particular is that vital creative links with the human experience have been increasingly ignored both with respect to art-as-human-statement and art-as-art. Education in the twentieth century was supposed to rectify this situation, but it defined its limits by its failure to arouse people to the possibilities of art. Because of a lack of true understanding and real appreciation, many artists have turned to the exposition of mathematical models or to even more corrupt forms of self-indulgence. Moreover, it has been nearly impossible for new voices to be heard, especially if they happened to be Black voices. This condition has existed for fifty years anyway. Racism flourished in the sacrosanct halls of Apollo and nobody made a murmur. That this is true can be verified by asking any fifteen-year-old Black when he learned of Jean Toomer or Countee Cullen or Gwendolyn Brooks. *The Last Poets* are significant in that their work plunges poetry into contemporary life without apology. Nobody had dared adopt a common voice to expose the cancer that is 20th century life prior to these heroes of the common Black man. Black experience tended to hide itself in music such as jazz and in dances such as the "Funky Chicken." But *The Last Poets* are tellin' it like it is. They are aware and through their public appearances and recordings are trying to make

the whole world aware.

Franz Fanon has said (in *The Wretched of the Earth*) that once the move for liberation and nationalization becomes apparent, intellectuals who are swept up by the fervor de-educate and re-educate themselves. Their verbs become active and strong, where under the crumbling bourgeois systems of thought they remained passive, weak, despairing and calculated to conjure idle imagery. The poetry of *The Last Poets* is absolutely urgent and naturally powerful. They are relating to those experiences which our better judgement knows are shared by all Black Americans. The chickens are coming home to roost and the field niggers have reinvigorated poetry whether squeamish intellectuals like it or not.

The problem of "obscenity" and "good taste" is meaningful in that through analysis the house niggers can be separated from the field hands. The criteria for good taste in Judeo-Christian societies rest on rules begun at least two thousand years ago, handed down with modifications which characterize Western social organization. *The Last Poets* are playing the game according to Black rules, rules which have little in common with those associated with externally-determined and antiquated "good taste" and "obscenity" strictures. There seems to be a consensus, marginal as it is, that obscenity is in the eyes and ears of the beholder/listener. If this is true, your reviewer is clearly a house nigger, since he bandies that word "obscenity" about as if it shared something in common with "good taste." Whose good taste? The white man's?

After extensive listening to and reading of *The Last Poets'* first album, I can only conclude that their experiences have been legitimate, that the Poets have communicated these experiences in a true and forthright manner, and that the poems represent flowers growing in the midst of the feces of a crumbling society. So accurate have the Poets

been that I have decided to abandon my previous poetic stances to talk the language of the field hands--at least in verse. Wake up niggers or we all through!

Malcolm Allen
Los Angeles, California

The Third World

Dear Sir:

Your editorial in the October *LIBERATOR* is captioned "The Third World," referring to "non-aligned nations."

The question involved is whether the symbol "third world" clarifies the relationships existing in the world today. It seems to me that it does not. In fact, it is more apt to cloud the reality underlying the struggle for freedom of non-aligned nations.

From an economic and psychological point of view, the nations referred to are in a transitional stage and are in the process of determining the nature of their internal relationships. "Non-aligned" is a more accurate term for their present relationships to the rest of the world.

To illustrate this I digress. When individuals discuss a subject, they are strongly influenced by past experience as well as their environment at the time. This is not only true of hearing, it is also true of the other senses. Two individuals may look at the same environment at the same time and place. They see the same objects from a different point of view, geographically -- also psychologically. Their brain patterns which represent their experience are different and this determines what they perceive. We need to be conscious of this when we decide to introduce a new symbol. Note also the implication that the reality and the symbol are not the same.

There may be a better symbol than "non-aligned," but it is not, in my judgment, "third world."

The complexity of human relations today requires that we do everything possible to permit and to promote the development of individuals so that they may be able to adjust to

Ain't No Ambulances for No Niggahs Tonight, by Stanley Crouch. Flying Dutchman, FDS-105.

Stanley Crouch is a Black man with an unyielding commitment to the political and economic improvement of the Black cultural crisis. His weapons are drums, poetry, essays, and fiction. On his album he reads an excerpt from a lucid diary-novel, *Relaxin' at Camarillo*, along with several poems. The Brother has a beautiful command of the language; there are no wasted phrases or words; each is functional. He throws some heavy images and his delivery is like Max Roach. He is a magician/creator, a *houngan*, and his California location should not make him inaccessible to us -- who think we're in the East.

The poems on *Ain't No Ambulances for No Niggahs Tonight*, in contrast to the work of The Last Poets, have an explanatory manner

that paints surreal pictures of the past and the current scene, sometimes mingled together. Black music references are frequent. On the printed page, Crouch's work should be read quickly to get the best results from his rhythms. His writings are full of warmth, of warnings, praises, about existing realities, true/sad and growing. Can you imagine the Yeti in connection with the European's propensity for skiing? Stan calls it a "race-memory." The album includes this and other homework on the Man (?).

An interesting feature is the author's "quick cultural quiz" and follow-through. The album was recorded live and despite the presence of Bloods in the audience, they failed the quiz. Bloods know more about white imitators of Black musicians than they know about Black musicians themselves. (How many Young-Bloods are digging Grand Funk Railroad? And why

couldn't a Black combo do what Rare Earth did with "Get Ready!")) A serious situation. Already Stan is known among white Rockers as "Crouch the Grouch" with, as *Rolling Stone* put it, "the new noose." His is a brief but important lecture on how we people involuntarily brought from Africa "have subsidized white America ever since we got here."

Stanley Crouch is among the growing camaraderie of Brothers who effectively combine their cultural/political commitments with their writing and other talents. *Relaxin' at Camarillo* won't mean a thing to us unless we know who Bird was/is. It would be good for all Black poets and writers to make these kinds of challenges to Black students wherever/whenever they come into personal contact. That's one way to get Niggahs to start acting like Black people.

-- Ron Welburn

THEATRE REVIEW cont from pg 19

says -- among other beautiful things -- "Colonial subjects die mainly from a way of life, Mr. Morris. The incidentals, gangrene, tumors, stillborn babies are only that -- incidentals."

Slithering among all the other occupants is Major Rice, professional soldier and amateur human being, whose contempt for the native ethic does not prevent his killing Blacks one day and fathering children by Black women the next day, a practice

no self-respecting American or American sympathizer will have any difficulty understanding.

Happy am I to report that Clebert Ford (late of the *LIBERATOR* staff) is excellent as the "grinning" porter, Peter. And kudos go to Humbert Allen Astredo's truly magnificent portrait of the doctor in the throes of personal discovery and distress.

...and Sister Lorraine Hansberry. Who knew and *shared* so much

with us before she had to leave. (Go back and read *Raisin* and *Sidney Brustein's Window*.) The Sister's program was in order IF you pay attention to the text between the lines.

Les Blancs is, finally, a work that will best be understood by Black people, quite simply because it is addressed to them...almost in its entirety, and certainly in spirit.

Go to see it as soon as you can.

LETTERS cont from pg 22

their rapidly changing environment without being overwhelmed by it. To this end we should continue efforts to describe as accurately and as objectively as possible the contemporary changes in human relations.

The key phase of the environment, on the world level, is economic. Each nation in the world is in a different stage of economic development. In the contemporary world the transition is from capitalism.

In the past, capitalism replaced feudalism. This was because capitalism permitted a better adjustment to the changing material environment than did feudalism.

Today we are confronted with a

similar situation. Our material environment requires a re-adjustment of human relations differing from those under capitalism. If we, as individuals, fail to understand the direction in which capitalism is now moving and fail to stop it, our country will drift into fascism. This is evident when we observe the continuing corporate mergers.

We already know from experience that fascism is too rigid to cope with an environment which is changing rapidly and becoming even more complex. The cost of another experience with fascism would be a greater disaster, a greater tragedy than the first.

The reason that the non-aligned nations do not form a "third world" is that their internal relationships are the effect of the struggle on a world level.

The struggle on the world level is between the drift toward fascism and the increasing realization that socialism can stop that drift.

As the non-aligned nations stabilize their internal relations they will not become part of a "third world" but will move along with fascism or defeat fascism by taking their place among the socialist nations.

J. A. Sohon
Cleveland, Ohio

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